

Key Information About NIOSH Certified Respirators

Use with Chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators

This tool will help you understand how to find and use NIOSH certification information.

Why is NIOSH certification important?

NIOSH certified respirators are rigorously checked and tested to make sure they can perform well and are suitable for workplace use. These assurances don't extend to respirators that aren't NIOSH certified.

How do I know if a respirator has been NIOSH certified?

You can't always tell by examining the respirator. If it's NIOSH certified, it'll have an approval label somewhere on the product box or on printed materials contained in the box.

The label will include "TC" numbers along with important caution and limitation information about the respirator's use.

How do I use TC numbers?

These numbers help you know which parts are acceptable to use on each respirator assembly.

When making repairs, make sure replacement parts used are listed under the TC number for the assembly chosen, otherwise, you will create a non-certified respirator assembly.

Each respirator assembly has one TC number. If more than one TC number is listed on the approval label, this means more than one NIOSH-certified assembly is available.

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Does NIOSH certification expire?

No. However, NIOSH certification is voided when:

- Users don't follow the approval label's use specifications, including listed cautions and limitations
- Respirator parts used aren't listed under the respirator assembly's TC number

NIOSH occasionally withdraws certification for a respirator assembly. When this happens, a user notice is posted on their website at

www.cdc.gov/niosh/responotices.html

What are N, R, and P series respirators?

N, R, and P are NIOSH certification categories that apply to negative-pressure air-purifying respirators that protect against hazardous particles. They do **not** apply to powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs).

N, R, and P respirators are also called particulate respirators because they use filter material to protect users from airborne dusts, sprays, mists, fumes, and other solid or liquid particle contaminants.

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What do the designations N, R, and P mean?

These designations refer to the use restrictions for respirator categories shown in **Table HT-1**.

Table HT-1 Use Restrictions for N, R, and P Respirator Categories	
Use	When
N	No oil is present in the air.
R	Oil is present, but only for a single shift or 8 hours of continuous or intermittent use. Note: Reuse beyond a single shift or 8 hours is not recommended.
P	Oil is present, but follow the manufacturer's time use limitations if you want to reuse these.

For more information about limitations and capabilities of these respirators, see the May 2, 1997 NIOSH Respirator User's Notice, "Letter to All Users of P-Series Particulate Respirators" or visit: www.cdc.gov/niosh.htm.

What do the designations 100, 99, and 95 mean?

Table HT-2 shows how efficient the respirator's filter capability is expected to be against particles that are at least 0.3 micrometers. The higher the number, the higher the efficiency expected.

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Table HT-2 Efficiency Levels for N, R, and P Respirators	
If the efficiency level is	This means
100	The filter is expected to trap 99.97 particles out of every 100. It is as efficient as a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter.
99	The filter is expected to trap 99 particles out of every 100.
95	The filter will trap 95 particles out of every 100. Note: For many exposure situations, this level is adequate.

Can I still use particulate respirators certified for “dust” or “dust, fumes and mists”?

These air-purifying particle-removing respirators are no longer easy to find. They were certified under NIOSH's former standard, 30 CFR Part 11, replaced by 42 CFR Part 84, and can no longer be sold for occupational use.

Also, due to less stringent testing of these respirators, you can only use them when you can prove the particulate contaminants involved are 2 micrometers or **larger** in size.

If you have particle contaminants that are **smaller** than 2 micrometers , you'll need to use an N, R, or P series respirator instead.

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Where can I find NIOSH certification requirements?

NIOSH certification requirements are in the federal regulation, Title 42 CFR, Part 84, Respiratory Protective Devices. This regulation replaced 30 CFR Part 11 in 1995.

You can find this standard, in its entirety by visiting:

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html>

